

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Claim 1 (previously presented) A split connecting rod comprising:
a crank-pin hole;
a valley provided on an inner circumferential surface of the crank-pin hole; and
a fracture starting point groove provided at the base portion of said valley;
wherein

upper and lower inner surfaces of the fracture starting point groove define an angle of about 10 degrees or less with respect to a predetermined fracture plane passing from a shaft center of the crank-pin hole through a bottom portion in a bottom surface of the fracture starting point groove; and

the valley forms an angle with respect to the predetermined fracture plane greater than the angle that the upper and lower inner surfaces define with respect to the predetermined fracture plane.

Claim 2 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 1, wherein a width of said fracture starting point groove is less than a width of said valley.

Claim 3 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 1, wherein said valley is provided such that said base portion is located at a position where a ratio of a depth of said fracture starting point groove to a shortest distance from an opening of said fracture starting point groove to a bolt hole is about 70% or more.

Claim 4 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 1, further comprising a bearing locking groove provided on said inner circumferential surface of the crank-pin hole, wherein said valley is provided on the inner circumferential surface of the crank-pin hole at a position opposite to a position where

the bearing locking groove is provided on said inner circumferential surface of the crank-pin hole.

Claim 5 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 4, wherein said bearing locking groove includes a pair of concave portions located at positions that are deviated in the circumferential direction of said inner circumferential surface of the crank-pin hole.

Claim 6 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 5, wherein a width of said valley in the circumferential direction of said inner circumferential surface is less than a width of the pair of concave portions of said bearing locking groove in the circumferential direction of said inner circumferential surface.

Claim 7 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 1, wherein the split connecting rod is a nut-less connecting rod that is made of one of forged material, a cast material and a sintered material.

Claim 8 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 1, further comprising a small end portion and a large end portion, wherein the large end portion includes the valley and the fracture starting point groove .

Claim 9 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 1, further comprising a rod portion and a cap portion.

Claim 10 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 1, wherein the fracture starting point groove includes a pair of the fracture starting point grooves provided on the inner circumferential surface of the crank-pin hole.

Claim 11 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 10, wherein the angle between the predetermined fracture plane and the valley is approximately 45 degrees.

Claim 12 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 11, wherein an interior angle of the valley is approximately 90 degrees.

Claim 13 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 10, wherein the upper and lower inner surfaces of the fracture starting point grooves are substantially parallel to the predetermined fracture plane .

Claim 14 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 1, wherein a cross section of the valley is larger than a cross section of the fracture starting point groove.

Claim 15 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 1, wherein the valley includes a pair of sloped portions.

Claim 16 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 15, wherein the sloped portions define chamfers for guiding a bi-partitioned bearing metal element that is inserted into the crank-pin hole.

Claim 17 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 15, wherein the sloped portions have curved shapes.

Claim 18 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 15, wherein the sloped portions have swelled, rounded shapes.

Claim 19 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 1, wherein the valley has a concave shape in an upper corner between the fracture starting point groove and an inner circumferential surface of the crank-pin hole.

Claim 20 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 1, wherein the valley has a rectilinear shape in an upper corner between the fracture starting point groove and an inner circumferential surface of the crank-pin hole.

Claim 21 (previously presented): A split connecting rod comprising:
a crank-pin hole;
a valley formed on an inner circumferential surface of the crank-pin hole; and
a fracture starting point groove formed at the base portion of said valley; wherein
the fracture starting point groove includes walls substantially parallel to a
predetermined fracture plane, and a bottom surface which connects the substantially
parallel walls forms an arc shape with a radius of R.

Claim 22 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 21, wherein a depth H from the inner circumferential surface of the crank-pin hole to a bottom portion of the bottom surface and the radius R are set such that a ratio H/R is about 1.0 to about 10.0.

Claim 23 (previously presented): An engine comprising the split connecting rod according to claim 1.

Claim 24 (previously presented): A vehicle comprising the split connecting rod according to claim 1.

Claims 25-30 (canceled).

Claim 31 (previously presented): An engine comprising the split connecting rod according to claim 21.

Claim 32 (previously presented): A vehicle comprising the split connecting rod according to claim 21.